

## Constantino's Death and Character 321

fcctly free from idolatry in every shape and form, and was never polluted with the blood or smoke of sacrifice, and the general impression which he leaves upon the reader's mind is that paganism was proscribed and the practice of the old religion declared to be a crime,

*It h* evident, however, that this was not the case. Kuscbius, as usual, supplies the corrective to his own exaggerations. He quotes, for example, in full the text of an edict which Constantine addressed to the\* governors of the East, wherein it is unequivocally laid down that complete religious freedom is to be the standing rule throughout the Empire. He beseeches all his subjects to become Christians, but he will not compel them. " Let no one interfere with his neighbour. Let each man do what his Hcnil desires/\* \* This edict was issued after the overthrow tif Licinius and is remarkable chiefly for the fervent profession of Christianity which the Emperor In it, \*\* 1 am most firmly convinced," he suys, "that I owe to the most High God my whole mini, my every breath, my most secret and inmost thoughts." And then he continues: "Therefore, I have dedicated my soul to Thee, in pure blend of love and feur.f For I truly adore Thy name, while I reverence Thy power which Thou hast manifested by many proofs and made my faith the surer/ " «

Hut did Constantine maintain this attitude of strict

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